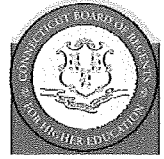




CONNECTICUT CHARTS-A-COURSE

Supporting Careers and Program Improvement in Early Care and Education



**To: The Honorable Andrew M. Fleischmann, Co- Chair,
The Honorable Andrea L. Stillman, Co- Chair
The Honorable Douglas McCrory, Vice Chair
The Honorable John W. Fonfara, Vice Chair
The Honorable Marilyn Giuliano, Ranking Member
The Honorable Antoinetta "Toni" Boucher, Ranking Member
Members of the Education Committee**

From: Darlene C. Ragozzine, Connecticut Charts-A-Course, Executive Director, ConnSCU and the Board of Regents for Higher Education

Re: Education Committee Public Hearing *S.B.300, AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.*

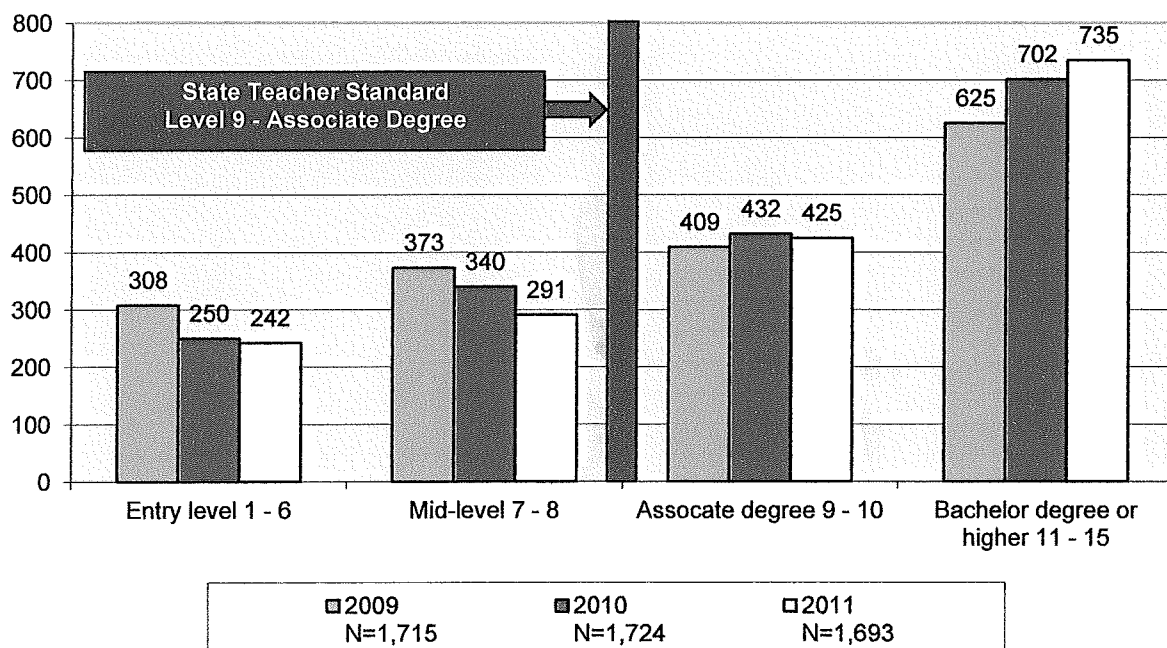
Date: March 5, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on a bill that will bring universal access to preschool for **ALL** of Connecticut's children. There will be many advocates speaking about the importance of preschool, and how this bill will help to achieve that, especially for those children who are our highest need. I will direct my remarks to building the workforce capacity needed to help achieve this goal and will provide you with data as it relates to current staff qualifications in our publicly funded programs.

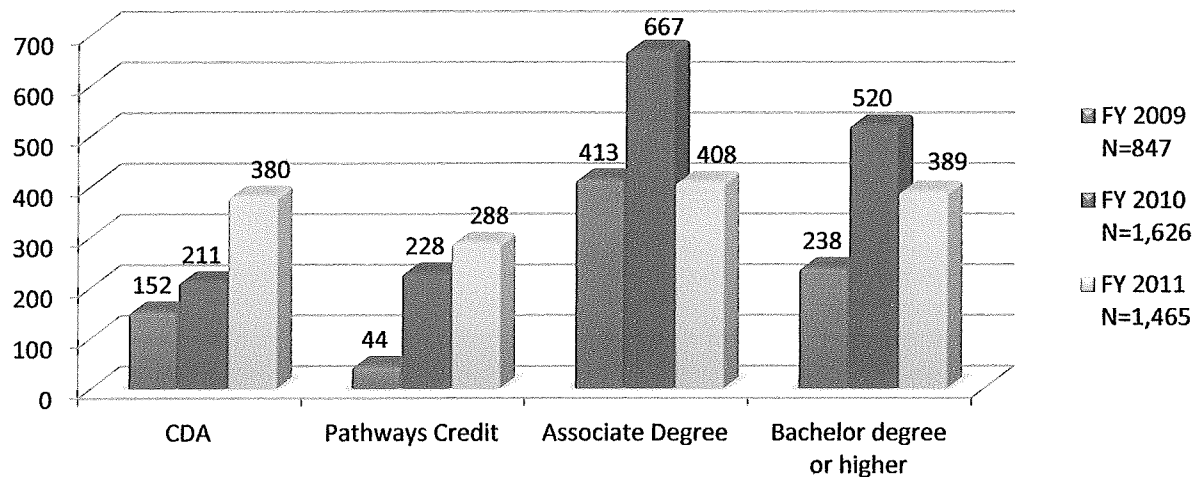
Current Connecticut law (PA11-54) and this bill requires that by 2015, 50% of the teachers in publicly funded programs hold a bachelor's degree and the remaining 50% have an associate's degree; and by 2020 all teachers must have a bachelor's degree. We are making good progress toward this goal as seen in the graphs.

Current profile of Connecticut's early childhood workforce (CCAC RBA March 2012)

Qualifications of Teachers in Centers that Receive Public Funding



Distribution of Scholarship Funding



CT Charts-A-Course is reporting the following data in this year's Results Based Accountability submission to the Appropriations Committee:

- 69% percent of the teachers that are working in publically funded programs have an associate's degree or higher, which is up from 65% in 2010;
- 31% of the current teachers do not hold either an associate's or bachelor's degree;
- \$1,644,318 was awarded in scholarship over 2010-11;
- the Scholarship Assistance Programs awarded 1,465 scholarships to individuals this year and 3,091 over the last two years;
- 81% of the scholarships went toward required coursework in a plan of study for degrees in early childhood education;

Because degree requirements are increasing, average salaries in community-based child care centers have risen to \$30,579. Salaries in a system requiring bachelor degrees are projected to be \$39,542 (starting bachelor degree teachers). It is important that increased qualifications are linked to increased compensation and benefits.

Clearly, the impact of phasing in a universal preschool program on the workforce must be given careful consideration. In addition, these new programs will be required to be NAEYC accredited, which also calls for increased qualifications for All levels of staff working in programs.

As a result of this we will need take deliberate and comprehensive steps to move the credentials of the workforce in order meet the goals of this bill:

- **Increase the financial support for the professional development for teachers, especially those working with our highest need children and families. Make this system of support as universal and seamless as possible for the individual within the state's higher education system.**
- **Expand professional development and workplace practices that support professional development activities. Build in release time and other supports that allow for paid time to take course work, visits to other programs, mentoring and coaching.**
- **Create greater access to higher education by offering programs that are creative , flexible, articulate and build among one another (with shared competencies) and take into account the work schedules and culture of adult learning.**
- **Identify current and new ways to increase compensation and provide teachers with commensurate pay parity with their education level.**